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Between the 1950s and the early 1970s, the Glasgow skyline was transformed by the construction of 321 high-rise blocks of council flats. Government subsidies encouraged this form of construction nationally, but Glasgow's particular enthusiasm was distinctive. It was driven partly by extremely poor inner-city conditions; at the same time, the city council was wary of overspill policies, which, by reducing Glasgow's working-age population, also reduced its revenue base. With a shortage of suitable building land, the result was the pepper-potting of towers on sites across the city. By the 1970s, however, policy had turned away from tall blocks. In recent years, many have been demolished amid broader discussions of architectural and social 'failure'.

In examining Glasgow's high-rise housing, the concern of Lynn Abrams, Ade Kearns, Barry Hazley and Valerie Wright is the lived experience of residents, explored, distinctively, over a long period rather than in a single moment. The authors' sources are two-fold. First, in the late 1960s, a substantial body of material was amassed by the sociologist Pearl Jephcott, who undertook a sustained investigation into the lives of residents in what were then newly built high flats. Her findings led to the book *Homes in High Flats* (1971), which then was novel for its focus on the experience of women and children. Jephcott's archive survives, and a selection of her interview transcripts has been re-analysed. At the same time, the team has conducted new interviews with current and former residents of high-rise blocks. They allow an exploration of changing attitudes and a discussion of the ways that individuals have come to understand and rationalise their experiences.

The result is a small but valuable book. An initial survey of Glasgow's high-rise programme is followed by thematic chapters examining privacy and home-making, the estate beyond the home, and the question of community. At its core, the book challenges the idea that living in high-rise housing was a consistently and inevitably alienating experience. Early residents forged new types of community, distinct from those they had left. Though not blind to the problems of high-rise living, residents made new homes in high blocks, and there is excellent discussion of the ways that flats were furnished and used. The book does not shy away from the more negative

view of high-rise living which has grown up since the 1980s, not least among some residents themselves, but it explains this in terms of management failures, and by seeing residents' views as a response to the process of 'residualisation' (in which council housing has come to be seen by some policymakers as a safety net, rather than something to which to aspire).

One key theme is the diversity of individuals' experiences, over time, and according to location, gender, and age. Residents of Castlemilk, a peripheral estate, complained of a lack of facilities and the poor state of communal areas, whereas those in the inner-city Gorbals felt better provided for. Men might enjoy the sociability of the pub or Labour club, whereas women – whose unpaid work was central to the home - could feel more isolated. And while adults might complain of a lack of amenities, those who were children in the 1960s and 1970s remembered many opportunities for play.

Relationships between individuals and their neighbours are also much discussed. New flats offered welcome privacy and space after the enforced communality and cramped conditions of slum tenements. Nonetheless, this new-found privacy was accompanied by new communal expectations, such as the cleaning of large shared landings, and regulations governing such things as the use of the rubbish chute. While some felt isolated, others forged neighbourly networks, and here the authors rebut the idea that new estates destroyed all sense of community; rather, community evolved in a new spatial setting. That said, long-standing residents often came to feel over time that newer neighbours had different values; the privacy of the home was thus redefined in terms of refuge. Yet even then, we read of contemporary examples of neighbourliness which further challenge simplistic assertions of the decline of community.

While a comprehensive study of high-rise housing would have to consider the parts played by a whole range of individuals and organisations, locally, nationally and internationally, the foregrounding of residents' voices in this book is a real strength. Like Guy Ortolano's recent book on Milton Keynes, it challenges the idea that the Welfare State and its architecture were doomed to fail; like Jon Lawrence's recent work on community, it exposes (and spatialises) the complexities of post-war society. Ultimately, it counters the 'top-down' focus of much writing on the architecture of post-war British social democracy, providing a compelling account which reminds us that the estates characterised by comedian Billy Connolly as 'deserts wi' windaes' were ultimately home to tens of thousands of people.

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